CPEC-Centre of Excellence is Going ‘great guns’

Yasir Masood & Sophia Mansoori | The Nation, Lahore | January 04, 2018
https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Jan-2018/cpec-centre-of-excellence-is-going-great-guns
https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/pub/CPECtribune.pdf

CPEC-Center of Excellence is committed to democratic process and is open to accountability. Being a think tank that it is dedicated to sound research and progress, we believe no research ever runs out of a margin to improve and thus grow. However, any investigation process, be it academic or journalistic in nature demands spirit of fairness. Hereby, we would take the opportunity to highlight some of the achievements of Center in merely 10 months’ time since its inauguration in March 2017 in response to the news story published in a section of the press on January 3, 2018.

In the published story, the reporter has tried to twist certain facts in a nonprofessional manner which has waned away the reality. For instance; let’s take research thematic areas of the centre which are well

functional under the supervision of foreign qualified and experienced scholars who have their dedicated expertise in the relevant sectors in Pakistan and abroad.

The published report ridiculously undermines the importance of Round Table Conferences (RTCs) which works as a centrifugal force in widening the horizon of research as a primary source of oozing out the inputs for a specific area from the academicians, researchers, policy practitioners and renowned scholars. In the same vein, four collaborative conferences have been conducted throughout the country in partnership with reputed universities, think tanks, and local/international, public and private institutions. In addition, four more conferences are planned and will be accomplished by April 2018. — which are available on the Centre's website i.e. www.cpec-centre.pk. The website which is of international standard is replete with information regarding the centre and CPEC related information including FAQs, CPEC opportunities and much more.

Moreover, newspaper articles are considered as one of the most pivotal source of information in this day and age. Therefore, the centre has been publishing research intensive articles which have helped a great deal to unfold new avenues for CPEC inclusive and sustainable development. Within 10 months Center of Excellence has published 22 newspaper articles covering a wide range of topics highlighting pioneering ways to tap in to new opportunities for regional integration, development initiatives in the country, inclusive economic growth, etc. Moreover, all the published articles will now be available in an upcoming publication of the center CPEC Quarterly which is to be launched on January 4, 2018 at the Ministry of Planning Development and Reforms, Islamabad. The publication also covers latest updates, opportunities and activities related to CPEC.

The reporter has tried to minuscule or completely overlooked the facts regarding the research papers produced by the centre. He has mentioned that "[the centre has] not produced even a single research paper in thematic areas", whereas the matter of the fact is completely the other way round. For instance, the centre has contributed five research papers which are accepted in well reputed journals. The Center of Excellence has produced following five research articles so far and many more are underway:

i. "How to boost exports through CPEC? Applying Growth Identification and Framework to Pakistan" which focuses on the payoffs of CPEC projects, and identifies different industries/sectors for their latent comparative advantage for Pakistan and to relocate the sectors/industries which have reached their potential growth in China, but can suitably repay margins for Pakistan.

ii. "Joint Ventures under CPEC and Prospects for Pakistan's Industry: A Remarkable Yield of One Belt One Road Initiative" in which the potential areas where joint ventures can help to support the economy of Pakistan are discussed.

iii. "Nine proposed priority SEZs under CPEC and SEZ Act: An approach to industrial development" which highlights the nine proposed SEZs and endowment of that locality to develop industries in sustainable and inclusive way.

iv. "Assessing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Context of Job Creation: A Comparative Analysis for CPEC SEZs in Pakistan" which elaborates the potential of new jobs creation in the SEZs.

v. “Challenges and solutions in building CPEC - A flagship of BRI” which addresses both Pakistani and Chinese researchers, decision makers and business community to leverage CPEC because of its value proposition to BRI and China.

On top of that, we are also working diligently on policy briefs and working papers which are regularly being shared with the relevant line ministries, academia and stakeholders. We also have research collaborations with some of the most reputed national and international education institutions and think tanks. The centre has also delivered capacity building workshops worth 1500 man hours organized at National Institute of Management, media delegations, universities, and chambers of commerce and industries from across the country.

The centre is determined and aiming to multiply its contributions in the times to come. The team of the centre is going extra miles under the mentorship of the Executive Director to achieve these daunting tasks with reinvigorating energy and fervour. The centre of excellence has achieved notable successes thus far which other think tanks strive to achieve in this limited time since its inception in March 2017. Our reputation in the research community is an epitome for the rest of the think tanks to emulate and contribute in the best interest of CPEC.